

# The Latter Day Saints' **Beacon**

Vol. Eight, Issue 4  
June-July 2016

**Sharing the Light of Jesus Christ**

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## **The Family and Zion**



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**Mission Statement:**

This magazine is dedicated to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and bearing witness to the everlasting promises of God. Our intention is to inspire the Saints to walk faithfully in the name of our Savior, bearing fruit worthy of the Kingdom of God.

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**Editor's Letter****Family Talk**

By Gary R. Whiting

**W**e have chosen to publish a series of articles about family ministry in this issue. These are practical things which every family can introduce by themselves or with the help of priesthood. It is important that we do all we can do to strengthen and preserve the family.

Although not an isolated target, the family has been heavily attacked in today's western society. The liberal thinkers have thought the traditional family an enemy to their plans for undisciplined and careless living. There are no aspects of the family which have been left untouched. The bonds of marriage, as taught in scripture, have been legally, per the courts, opened without any essential restrictions or definitions. Gender confusion is now a celebrated form of self-identity. Children who survive pregnancy are subjected to all kinds of information and instruction that is contrary to scripture and a worldview based on faith and covenant in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Why are families so important? The most obvious answer is that they are the God-designed means for humans to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth. God's model is at risk because the world has rejected the pattern established by God in favor of anything but a mother and father in a marriage covenant for life, raising children to love each other and to choose God as their Father.

Families are also important because they are models of the relationship between Christ and the church. This is what the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 5:20-33. As the branch is the primary unit of the church, so the family is the primary unit of society—especially the society of God called Zion.

Throughout history God has made covenants with families. They are, therefore, important in the overall plan of God and show how God interacts with his children. The covenant of priesthood is a perpetual covenant to be passed from father to son. God's covenant with Abraham was not just with the man Abraham, but with the patriarch (father) of the family that would come from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. The Book of Mormon is largely the story about the covenant made between God and Lehi's family.

When the family is attacked, it is more than a tradition of Western society that is threatened. It is a direct effort to undermine a critical element of God's revelation to his children. Our Father in heaven ministers to us through families, blesses us through families and teaches us through families. We must remember that God made man in his own image, male and female he made them (see Genesis 1:29) and established them in marriage (Genesis 2:28-30).

This magazine issue is just an introduction into ministry to the family. We give a few hints, tips and insights about the family, but cannot address the whole of the topic here. We hope that some of you will, at the least, go to your knees and pray for wisdom and God's help to preserve and bless your family. Will you let God open your eyes to see the need and what can be done to strengthen your family and the families of your branch or neighborhood?

We hope that the Aaronic priesthood members will awaken to their duty and diligently study the principles of family ministry and do it. It is

very significant to recognize that in God's holy priesthood, one office is specifically designed to be in the homes to teach families (D&C 17:10).

God told Joseph Smith and other leading men of the church in Section 90 that they must get their families in order. Their ministry was hindered because they had neglected to care for their families and teach them as they should. This instruction to the brethren begins in verse 6 with one of the most often quoted passages from the Doctrine and Covenants, and yet it is seldom quoted in the context of raising children and setting our homes in order.

**The glory of God is intelligence or, in other words, light and truth; and light and truth forsaketh that evil one. Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and, God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again in their infant state, innocent before God. And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth (D&C 90:6).**

In the following verses, Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith Jr. and Newel K. Whitney are chastened and rebuked for the state of their families. Satan did not wake up in 2016 and say, "Hey, I have to break up the family." No, he has been at this work from the very beginning with the children of Adam and Eve.

The ministry of the the First Presidency and the Bishop was hindered because they had not entirely taught and cared for the spiritual welfare of their children. Is it any less important today for families and children to be taught the truth, armed against the wiles of the devil and to be set in order?

In following issues of the Beacon we will be addressing God's plan for promised lands and the gathering of the House of Israel. These are promises to families that go by the name of Joseph, Lehi, Nephi, Laman, Jacob, Judah and Abraham. God is busy setting his house in order by calling us to be his sons and daughters by faith in Christ. How about you? †

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The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties: and he may also ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons; and he is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present, but when there is an elder present he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties. In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires (D&C 17:10).

# Create Sanctuary

By Chadwick H. Nestman

Recently I was reading the scripture found in Mark 4:26-34 where Christ describes via a parable what the kingdom of God is like. The parable he uses is about a man who scatters seed on the ground, but is ignorant of how the seeds grow. He just knows that it grows day after day; night after night; whether he sleeps or not. All by itself, the grain first grows a stalk, then a head and finally a full kernel until it is fully ripe and he harvests that which he sowed. Immediately, Jesus provides a different parable about the mustard seed, a very small seed indeed. Yet, when it matures as a tree, birds come and roost in the tree providing sweet song to all those who pass by. After telling the people gathered around him more parables, he pulls his disciples together and explains these parables to them.

We must always remember that Jesus was Jewish—by birth, by tradition, and by religion. Remembering this helps us put his parables, ministry, sermons and teachings into context. For example, when he ended his sojourn in the wilderness after his baptism by John, he went from city to city preaching repentance and baptizing. It was not until later that his ministry changed to what we generally accept as “The” ministry of Jesus. The question is, why did he begin by doing one type of ministry and then change to another? The answer is that Jesus was following Jewish tradition—all of the religious reformers of his time preached repentance and baptized, with John being the greatest—not because he had the largest following but because he introduced the world to Jesus. It was not until Jesus had established himself as a player in the religious arena that his style changed, his message became bolder and he began to be seen as being more closely aligned with God than any of the other reformers of the day.

It is from this transition period that Mark shares a number of conversations Jesus had with his disciples. For example:

**And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard this, he said unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

**And they came and said unto him, The disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast; and why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.**

**No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred; but new wine must be put into new bottles (Mark 2:13-20).**

First, Jesus clearly sets himself apart from the other religious leaders seemingly suspending current religious rules while he is here. And, to help punctuate his new stance, he gives the people around him this parable of “new cloth sewn onto old” and “new wine into old bottles.” In other words, his message is new and different from what the others are preach-



**The parable ... is about a man who scatters seed on the ground, but is ignorant of how the seeds grow. He just knows that it grows day after day; night after night; whether he sleeps or not. All by itself, the grain first grows a stalk, then a head and finally a full kernel until it is fully ripe and he harvests that which he sowed.**

ing and teaching; specifically, the message of repentance and baptism must be examined in a new light and not interpreted using traditional methods. In essence, Jesus defines a god not in terms of distance, appeasement, or anger, but in terms of sanctuary. Jesus places us in the arms of a loving father, a protector, and a refuge rather than a god who demands sacrifice and infinite adherence to rules.

In this changed pattern of ministry, Jesus emphasizes faith; not just conceptual faith but applied faith. He demonstrates that by faith all things are possible and that by faith justification can be had—a theme that is picked up by Paul some 20-30 years later. Note the instance in Mark 3:1-6 where Jesus poses the question to the Pharisees, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?” with regard to healing a man with a withered hand. Mark goes on to say that Jesus was angered at them for choosing to remain in the traditions of their fathers while ignoring the blessings that were theirs if they only had faith. Although Jesus was angry with them, he grieved for their hard-heartedness.

This new twist on ministry touched the lives and hearts of the people, so much so that the masses pressed him wherever he went. It is at this point that the Pharisees not only sought to kill him because of his popularity, but because of this changed emphasis and interpretation of religion. And, it is here that Jesus made a conscious decision to speak to the “unbelievers” in parables rather than in clear, open speech, but for those who believed, Jesus spent time explaining the meaning of the parables.

Thus, it is in Mark 4 that we have one of the most recognized parables given by Jesus: the parable of the farmer who sowed his seeds with some falling along the path, some in rocky places, some among thorns, and some on good soil. Then Jesus said “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Do you have ears to hear? What is the parable saying to you?

The farmer is the preacher or teacher sent by God. The seed is the word of God. The soil represents you and me. Some of us hear the word and respond to it but we get distracted by the things of the world or by the formalities of rules imposed by

different religious orders. But when we strive to live by the word, our lives become transformed and we bear “fruit.”

To put it another way, when we allow ourselves to become a sanctuary for God, we radiate godliness. Listen to the words of Paul. “Know ye not that ye are the temple (sanctuary) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defiles the temple (sanctuary) of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple (sanctuary) of God is holy, which temple (sanctuary) ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Paul writes this letter from Ephesus sometime around 57 A.D.—27 years after the resurrection of the Christ. It is in response to the abuses and contentions that have been reported to him by those he left behind to care for and grow the church at Corinth. The letter itself speaks of the divisions and strife that has risen between the different factions of leadership. It also decries certain cases of immorality that had become notorious among them and how because of that immorality they are not able to rightly understand the doctrine of Christ, including the celebration of the Lord’s supper. And finally, he defends the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which apparently seems to be in question among them.

It is in this context that these words were written. It is both a gentle and not-so-gentle reminder that when we become Christ’s we become new beings—transformed into creatures who are holy and because we are holy we are in effect temples of God. The term “temple” is synonymous with “sanctuary” as used in the Old Testament, which means the place where the presence of God dwells. Note this meaning: the temple and/or sanctuary is where the presence of God dwells.

We cannot wait for sanctuary to happen but must do something to bring it about. It is both personal and collective in nature. It is a call that as followers of Christ we cannot deny; it is a responsibility that we cannot shirk. To create sanctuary means that we must be engaged with God, we cannot be sitting by the side waiting for Him to do something for us, but must seek him out, become part of Him, and then radiate that connectedness to all to whom we come in contact. †

**To put it another way, when we allow ourselves to become a sanctuary for God, we radiate godliness.**

# Establishing a Family Altar

By Barbra Jordison

Can we blossom, as a church, without family altars in our homes? Can we ground our families in true relationship with God without these intimate gatherings which demonstrate that we seek God, and devote ourselves to both God and one another?

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). God is pleased when we gather for fellowship and make him the center of that time together.

**Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).**

Altars are the places where various peoples and cultures worship either the God of Israel or other gods. There are many mentions of altar construction and use in scripture. From all accounts, God pays attention to what happens at these altars. There is even an altar at the center of temple worship, where offerings and sacrifices were laid. The type of sacrifice left at altars constructed to honor God changed following the resurrection of Christ. The required offerings were thereafter to be those of a broken heart and a contrite spirit—meaning hearts laid open to allow God within, and spirits humbled in respect before the awesomeness of God. These altars, often constructed by the patriarch or leader of the family, drew members of the family together in remembrance and thanks to God, in petition of wisdom and protection, and in memorial or celebration for all that God was and had done. Peoples and nations without altars built to Jehovah fell into wrong paths and sinful behaviors and beliefs.

## What is a Family Altar?

The family altar is a place where a family comes together to worship, pray, learn, share and make offerings unto the Lord. It is informal, yet reverent. It is a place where the earnest things of the Lord are written into the hearts of those residing in the home; where they draw together and demonstrate respect for God and his ways. The family altar is an affirmation that God is the center of the home. It sends the message that “God means something here.”

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## Why is the Family Altar Important?

The snares and entanglements of the world surround God’s people on a daily basis. The adversary is capable and practiced when it comes to wheedling his way into our relationships and our values; he is subtle and crafty and distracting. The family altar calls us to remembrance of God’s law and teachings—Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). At the family altar, God draws us into meaningful conversations that teach and support Christian convictions and Godly character. We are invited to share openly our challenges and pray for one another; offering counsel and support, and instructing family members more fully how they should conduct themselves with God and one another.

## How do I Create a Family Altar?

Every member of the home should look forward to time spent at the family altar. This means what is done there should appeal to the interests and maturity of all present. Hold the family altar at a time that is convenient for those in your household. All members of the household ought to be encouraged to participate and help direct the worship. This will allow them to learn new skills and develop creativity, confidence and leadership. Be sensitive to family member attention spans. Avoid the boredom of routine by introducing variety. Keep things meaningful with members left hungering for more. If family members become loathe to participate, it will turn into a time of dread and disappointment. Do not allow gossip or criticism at your family altar. Remember, it is a time to worship, a time to value the things of God and to demonstrate he is the center of your lives!

## What are Some Ideas for Worship?

Anchor your altar time on the word of God. Scripture strangely and beautifully has the ability to breathe life into those willing to study it. It will imprint itself on your heart and embed itself in your mind. Have you ever studied a scripture in the morning and found experiences throughout the day where you were led to share it, or rely on it for strength, encouragement or chastisement? The struggles, victories and even failures of those whose stories are recorded in scripture have significant meaning. They demonstrate God’s interaction with mankind since the beginning—how

he seeks a relationship with you and how he values your exchanges with him.

Open the hearts of those present. Keep things personal and genuine, encouraging everyone to speak about whatever is on their heart. Let everyone rally around what is going on with one another. A favorite in our household is when we have everyone share what is going on with them in the week ahead, and have each person pray for someone else in the circle. It is refreshing to know you have been heard by others, and touching to hear others thank God for you and petition him sincerely, and even passionately, in behalf of your needs. Prayer places a mantle over people, and sends them forth in a way that says “go with God” or “go in the care of he who loves you most.”

Be certain that remembering and honoring God is always at the center of your activities; otherwise it becomes just time spent together. While not bad on its own, it is not worship! Depending on how often you gather at the family altar, there are additional things that can be incorporated into your interactions that give altar time variety and make people enthusiastic about gathering. For instance:

- Perhaps they could tell of needs or challenges they are facing and need help to work through or resolve.
- Consider including prayer, song, discussion, reading of short scripture passages, storytelling—feeding inquisitive minds, young and old. Incorporate variety, such as:
  - Read short stories which teach—use pictures whenever possible. Jesus used parables over and over again in his ministry because word pictures make teaching more palatable. They also help keep the attention of children.
  - Play games which reinforce good decision-making.
  - Share testimonies.
  - Listen to dramatized biographies of Godly servants. There are many available that appeal to all age groups.
  - Share personal dilemmas and get input from one another on how to solve them using scriptural principles.
  - Read stories from the scriptures to supply answers to different family needs and to challenge family members to more Spirit-filled living.
  - Explore the promises of God and his blessings to the faithful.

**Be certain that ... honoring God is always at the center of your activities.**

— Go through the miracles of Christ (no more than one a day). Discuss what you learned about Jesus from each one.

— Read age-appropriate devotionals and discuss.

— Study people in scripture—what can we learn from their stories and situation?

— Teach object lessons (Christ readily did this). These serve as practical examples of a principle or abstract idea.

— Choose one or two key scriptures which offer hope and strength and do scripture memorization.

— Review doctrine—identify the plumb-line from which Godly response is measured.

— Sing and memorize hymns of great faith.

— Pray together—confessing weaknesses and praying for one another.

## What If We Struggle or Can't Seem to Get Our Family Altar in Place?

Consider talking with members of the priesthood, your women's group or Christian families you know. Find out what others are doing and perhaps join your families together one or two times to give you a jump start.

## What If We Don't Have Time?

People tend to find time for what they feel is important. Work to build the family altar as habit and be as consistent as possible in meeting there, but flexible enough to recognize the need to adapt. Some days nothing will go as planned. Everyone may be running late or have heavy time constraints. Consider gathering the family for a brief prayer before everyone leaves the house. Plant a seed for the day that everyone can carry with them.

## In Closing

Psalm 78 exhorts us to learn and teach God's law—to show our children the praises of the Lord, his strength and the wonderful works he has done. And all this, “That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psalm 78:7). It also tells us what befalls the stubborn and rebellious who do not. †

# Insights into Being Zion

*By Chadwick H. Nestman*



For thousands of years, Biblical prophets defined Zion as a sacred physical and spiritual place where God resided. It was not until Joseph Smith and the prophets of the RLDS church provided additional insight through the revelations they received from God that we have come to understand that the meaning of Zion is much more than a sacred physical and spiritual place. But, for us to gain this understanding we need to first understand the information the Jews and Christians had available to them through non-restoration scriptural sources.

The first time Zion is mentioned in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible is found in 2 Samuel 5 where King David captured Jebus, the capital of the Jebusites. Biblical scripture from this time forward equates Jebus with Jerusalem. As an aside, the city Jerusalem is documented by the Egyptians to have existed as far back as the 19th century B.C. and by the Akkadians as far back as the 13th century B.C., when it was known as Rusalimum and Urusalim, respectively. Although there does not appear to be direct references to the city being a sacred place, records recovered from the general Canaanite environment, and Egyptian and Akkadian sources, imply that the city was revered because of its ancient association with a deity. It is in these indirect sources that the name Salem (or shalom) is found, the same Salem mentioned in the scriptures as being the city of Melchizedek (Genesis 14). Finally, ancient religious literature links Melchizedek's Salem with Enoch and his city of Zion (see <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jerusalem/>).

Knowing this abbreviated history of Jerusalem, we have a better understanding why Jerusalem, including the city fortress of the Jebusites, was called Zion. What

appears as a discrepancy in 1 Chronicles 11 (KJV) where King David refers to the captured Jebusite city of Jebus and the castle of Zion is just another way of identifying the city as Jerusalem and as a fortress. Later, David re-named this fortress/castle to the “city of David” and expanded the walled fortress to include an area where the Jebusites and Israelites lived. Thus, the place of Zion was expanded from just a city to include the new expanded city and the fortress/castle.

During the expansion of Jerusalem, David bought a threshing floor from a Jebusite named Arauna where the Ark of the Covenant was later placed. Still later, Solomon built his temple on this threshing floor and expanded the fortress walls again, including the temple area as part of Zion. Thus we see that Zion began as a small place then grew to include the expanded City of David, and then expanded once more to include the temple site (The reader is encouraged to read the following KJV verses: 2 Samuel 5:7; Psalm 2:6; Psalm 48:2, 11–12; Psalm 132:13; Jeremiah 31:6, 12; Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 28:16; Zechariah 9:13; Hebrews 12:22; and 1 Peter 2:6.).

To confuse the matter more, Zion came to be referred to as only the Temple Mount. In addition, the phrase “Daughter of Zion” was used by Biblical writers to refer to Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount), the Daughter of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Jewish people in general. All of these were and are still referred to as Zion! For non-Restoration Christians, “Daughter of Zion” came to be equated with the “Bride of Christ” which was considered the Christian church itself (Hebrews 12:22 KJV). It is only when we review the letter to the Hebrews, in the King James Version, that

we get a clue about Zion as God intended it to be—a righteous people living the laws and commandments of God.

Are you confused yet? Without the scriptural contribution and the associated teachings of the Restored Church, those who rely only on the KJV, and its many derivatives, have limited the purpose and role of what Zion was at the time of Enoch.

**And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them ... And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion (Genesis 7:23,25, emphasis added).**

Further, relying solely on the KJV, one misses why it is so important for us to understand the need for Enoch's Zion in the days to come, and why we need to be about God's business today being Zion so its cause, principles, promise, people, and places are fully demonstrated. Somewhere in the writing of the KJV a belief that a place could be the Zion of Enoch, the residence of God and those righteous believers who followed God's commandments was left out. Only in the writings of Hebrews does one find a glimmer that Zion was to become a state or status reserved for God's chosen people and no one else.

It was only when the prophets of the Restoration were given a vision and understanding of how Zion was much more than just a place, but also included the people who inhabited the place, that we begin to understand how we can be Zion. They expanded the concept of a single place to multiple places; one in the current Jerusalem and another in a New Jerusalem to be founded in the Americas.

These seemingly simple reinterpretations of ancient prophecies and new revelations found in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants forever changed how we are to interpret Zion, work to bring it about, and how we are to make it a central part of our process of perfection. However, they also cause us to struggle with what it means in our daily lives for us to be Zionite, to build Zion, and to live our lives in a place called Zion.

Joseph Smith Jr. was given a deeper understanding that God was so pleased with the righteousness of Enoch and his followers that he called them Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and there were no poor among them (Genesis 7:23 IV). Note that God first called the people Zion, not their city or

place of abode. Two verses later we find that Enoch built a city that he called "the city of holiness, even Zion." This is the link between Zion being both a people and a place; because the people were holy, the city itself was a holy place.

Later, the Restored Church was commanded to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (D&C 6:3a; 10:3a; 11:3b and Isaiah 34:8). Certainly, the "cause of Zion" must refer to the state or condition of the people. Specifically, the "cause of Zion" is a call to become a people who are pure in heart, righteous and working together with one heart and mind to bring people to Christ; following as perfectly as possible the model spoken of in Matthew 25 or the perfection spoken of in Hebrews 6. It is when we perfect the inner qualities spoken of in Matthew and the critical components brought out in Hebrews that we become the foundation of Zion as a people. The place where we live then becomes a habitat of the Lord as a place of safety and refuge from the trials and tribulations of the world.

Even with this clarification about Zion, it appears that Joseph Smith (see RLDS Church History 1:205-206) seems to have confused the issue when in 1833 he received revelation identifying Independence, Mo., as the place where Zion would be built in the Americas. At first glance, it appears that these revelations seem to revert to the Zion of Biblical prophets as developed in the KJV; it was to be a place rather than a people. He further told the Saints that there would be two Zions; one located at Independence, Mo., and one at Jerusalem, Israel. The Zion in Independence would be called "New Jerusalem," just as a New Jerusalem would be built on the current Jerusalem site in Israel. This confusion is quickly dissipated when the revelations are put into context with the Inspired Version and the Book of Mormon, where we find that the House of Israel (both the House of Ephraim and the House of Judah) will be gathered one last time together with those righteous Gentiles from around the world to these two Zions. The implication is clear. Both Zions will expand in the last days from their center places in all directions to accommodate the number of righteous people desiring to enter Zion. The inhabitants of these cities will be called to come into its walls, and they will be the righteous believers of Jesus the Lord, being of one mind and heart and there will be no poor among them. Those who are rebellious or non-believers will be afraid

**It is when we perfect the inner qualities spoken of in Matthew and the critical components brought out in Hebrews that we become the foundation of Zion as a people.**

to come to these cities because they will know that God dwells with the people and protects them from all tribulation.

This massive movement of righteous people into Zion is referred to in scriptural writings as the gathering of the House of Israel; a gathering that will occur only after the writings of the House of Judah are combined with the writings of the House of Jacob, or to put it another way, the writings of all the different tribes of Israel will be brought together so everyone will have the fullness of the gospel (Ezekiel 37). It is the fullness of the gospel that creates an environment where all peoples will hear the testimony of Jesus, bowing to him as Lord of all, turning the hearts of men to be the people of God living the words of Matthew and Hebrews. In turn, this change in the hearts of men will initiate the gathering of the House of Israel (or more correctly the House of Judah and the House of Ephraim). The House of Judah will be gathered to the New Jerusalem (Zion) in Israel, and the House of Ephraim will be gathered to the New Jerusalem (Zion) in the Americas. Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning this gathering:

**Behold, I, the Lord, in the beginning, blessed the waters, but in the last days by the mouth of my servant John, I cursed the waters; wherefore the days will come that no flesh shall be safe upon the waters, and it shall be said in days to come, that none is able to go up to the land of Zion, upon the waters, but he that is upright in heart. And, as I, the Lord, in the beginning cursed the land, even so in the last days have I blessed it, in its time, for the use of my saints, that they may partake the fatness thereof (RLDS Church History 1:212).**

Isaiah pointed out in several of his prophecies that this gathering will be headed by the gentiles. Most Christian commentators are quick to point out that the gentiles mentioned by Isaiah are those who make up the Christian church. Even a review of early Restoration newspapers, letters, and articles limit the gentiles to the members of the church—the Restored church.

Avraham Gileadi, a noted contemporary LDS author and lecturer on the prophet Isaiah, however, has pointed out that the gentiles mentioned by Isaiah are not necessarily the members of the church—Restoration or general Christian. His conclusion, after years of studying Isaiah, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, is that these will be

“special” gentiles. They will be gentiles who have been transformed by their belief in Jesus, made perfect through the ordinances and sacraments of Christ and who outwardly live the life that Jesus would have them live. In other words, they would be Zion because they would be of one mind and heart and there would be no poor among them. The chosen gentiles are those who have accepted Jesus as the Only Begotten Son of God, repented of their sins and strive each hour of every day to remain in the state of repentance, have been baptized by water and by the laying on hands of one authorized by the holy calling of God, believe in the resurrection of the dead, and look forward to the time when we will be called to live life eternal with Jesus. These are the gentiles who have endured to the end and will be honored by Christ when he welcomes, as trusted servants, those who have overcome the temptations of this world and have readily borne testimony to all to whom they were sent.

Joseph Smith Jr. and the church leaders of the early Restoration tried to establish Zion in Independence, but the execution was poorly carried out because the condition of the people was not ready for such an endeavor. The commandments laid out by God were ignored, the guidance and leadership provided by church leaders were ignored, and people began to take control of their own lives by moving to Independence without proper preparation being done beforehand. It was such a mess that God admonished the church as a whole telling us that the gathering would not occur until we were ready (see D&C 102).

Later RLDS prophets provided additional information or snippets of what Zion would be and how we could better align ourselves with the ways of God in order to enable the gathering. One of those snippets was the establishment of “stakes”—like stakes of a tent supporting its rigidity and structure (see D&C 68, 81, 98, 104, 106, 107, 108, 117, 122, 125, and 129). Section 107 is particularly important for us because it tells us that these stakes will not just be adjacent to Independence but scattered abroad. Unfortunately, we are still not ready for the blessings God has in store for us because the stakes never really became the Zion God intended and have been disbanded as the RLDS transitioned to the Community of Christ.

Thus, we see that the concept of Zion expressed for thousands of years as a sacred place where God will dwell is only partially correct. A needed key component is a people

**Unfortunately, we are still not ready for the blessings God has in store for us because the stakes never really became the Zion God intended**

**For millennia people have tried to find the secret formula to replicate a place where God would dwell, yet their search has been in vain. There is no secret formula. Being Zion is hard work.**

who truly live and represent God in everything we do. These chosen Gentiles will carry the tribes of Israel to their respective Zion home on their shoulders, nourishing them along the way with the words of God, expounding their meaning, and teaching the ways of God. No longer will the House of Israel look forward to the coming of the Messiah but will rejoice in knowing that he came and returns to harvest that which was planted.

For millennia people have tried to find the secret formula to replicate a place where God would dwell, yet their search has been in vain. There is no secret formula. There will never be a place that replicates the city of Enoch until the people turn to God and follow his commandments, striving to attain the perfection described in the letter to the Hebrews. Being Zion is hard work. It requires putting our priorities in order, getting our lives aligned with God's creative intent and seeking to assure that our families are striving for the cause of Zion. The scriptures are clear—open and read them, study them, seek to understand them by asking God in faith, unwavering for verification.

Being Zion means that we must end the confusion and contention within ourselves, our homes, and our branches. Thomas à Kempis, a German mystic & religious author (1380-1471), once said in his book *Imitation of Christ*: “Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.” Only Christ can make us whole, and only with Christ in our hearts can we cease the contention in our lives. Once we conquer contention, “being Zion” becomes not just a possibility, but a reality.

“We’re Marching to Zion” has been a favorite hymn of the Saints for decades. Are we finally ready to begin our journey? Are we finally ready to put God before all other things in our lives and live the life he created us to have? Are we finally ready to focus our attention to becoming Zion? With God’s guidance and leadership, it is a task that can be accomplished overnight if we put our needs after the needs of others. Just think, Zion is only as far away as the spiritual condition of the Saints. †

# Making an Ark of Testimony

*By Alan Smith*

The Old Testament talks about the Ark of the Covenant or the Ark of Testimony. In it the Israelites kept things that reminded them of the covenants they had made with God and how his power had blessed them when they were obedient.

Among the things kept there were the tablets on which were inscribed what is now called the Ten Commandments, Aaron’s rod that brought forth buds, fruit and almonds when all the rods of those wanting to lead were brought together in the tabernacle, and a measure of the manna the people were fed in the wilderness.

We know of the blessing that the Ark of the Covenant was to the people of Moses’ time.

There were physical acts of testimony in the Book of Mormon times too. Somewhere there is a group of swords buried as a testimony. The Lamanites who had been converted wanted to bury their swords and make war no more. This is how they recorded their action.

**Let us hide them away that they may be kept bright, as a testimony to our God at the last day, or at the day that we shall be brought to stand before him to be judged, that we have not stained our swords in the blood of our brethren since he imparted his word unto us, and has made us clean thereby (Alma 14:40).**

We remember Noah’s ark and how it was used to get people through

one of the biggest catastrophes on record. What if each family had an ark of testimony of its own—some way of collecting testimonies or reminders of testimonies that would serve as a way of ensuring we remember the blessings the Lord has given us and enable us to share them with family and friends? What if we had a reminder of the Lord's blessing in the past to help us know that we can be brought through whatever troubling times we face? How can we become disheartened or believe that the Lord will not seek to continue to fulfill his purposes in us when we have a record made while the testimonies of our lives are still fresh?

At Seventy Missionary Family Reunions in the past, we have had the opportunity to begin sharing these testimonies and writing them down for our own family arks of testimony. But this is something any family can do.

It may be a box in which you keep physical items that remind you of those rich experiences with the Lord. Here are some examples I can think of from my own life.

When Valle and I moved to Mount Ayr, Iowa, in 1980, we were looking for a home to buy and were having trouble finding one that would meet our budget. We took an index card and listed all the things that we needed in a home. They included the number of bedrooms for our family, two separated living areas so visiting could be done with people away from the rest of the family if this was needed for church ministry. Then we prayed about the home.

In a little less than a year, a house which we had seen before came on the market again. The first time we had seen it, dogs were being raised in the basement and there were other items that were unappealing. This time these items had all been taken care of and the home was available for a price we could afford. We called it our miracle home.

We still have that card in one of our files. Pulling it out when we could share it when we share the testimony with our family and others would be a great addition to a family ark of testimony.

The medical record which illustrated how a healing had taken place in one's life. A copy of a check that came in the mail to meet a need after tithing was paid with money we were not sure we had to give. A bulletin from a service of worship that was especially meaningful. A camp log from a camp where a mountain top experience with Christ was shared. A family might have many items like this that could be placed in a box that could be displayed somewhere.

Can you imagine how easy it would be to share a testimony with someone who came into your home

and asked about that box on the shelf in your living room was?

Maybe your "ark" would not be a collection of physical things, but a collection of written testimonies and blessings. Our daughter Erin has kept a journal just for such instances.

When the testimonies are written down as they happen, many of the details are preserved that might otherwise get lost in the recesses of our minds, never to be truly remembered with the richness of the immediate experience. But testimonies written down any time they come to mind can really be a blessing in the life of the person who writes them and those who hear or read them later.

I know our daughter Erin refers back to her journal many times when she wants to remember a particular experience. These can be shared with family and make great opportunities for sharing in family worship settings at church. They can be referred to when preparing for a prayer and testimony service as well, making sure one has something to share.

One of the experiences I know that Erin has written down in detail in her journal is from the period when her grandfather Paul Loving was nearing the end of his life. He was battling cancer, and they were taking him for a ride in a wheelchair one day. He began singing some hymns.

Now Paul would sing "Three Wood Pigeons" from his childhood, but never let on that he was much of a singer to his children or grandchildren. They were amazed that he was singing and asked him about it. He quoted King Benjamin:

**That I might rid my garments of your blood, at this period of time when I am about to go down to my grave, that I might go down in peace, and my immortal spirit may join the choirs above in singing the praises of a just God (Mosiah 1:68-69).**

"I'm getting ready to join the choirs," he said. Having that testimony to share with others is a real treasure.

My family is enriched by books of testimony that have been written by parents and grandparents on both sides of the family that have been passed down. We were blessed to have these books printed in larger numbers than some.

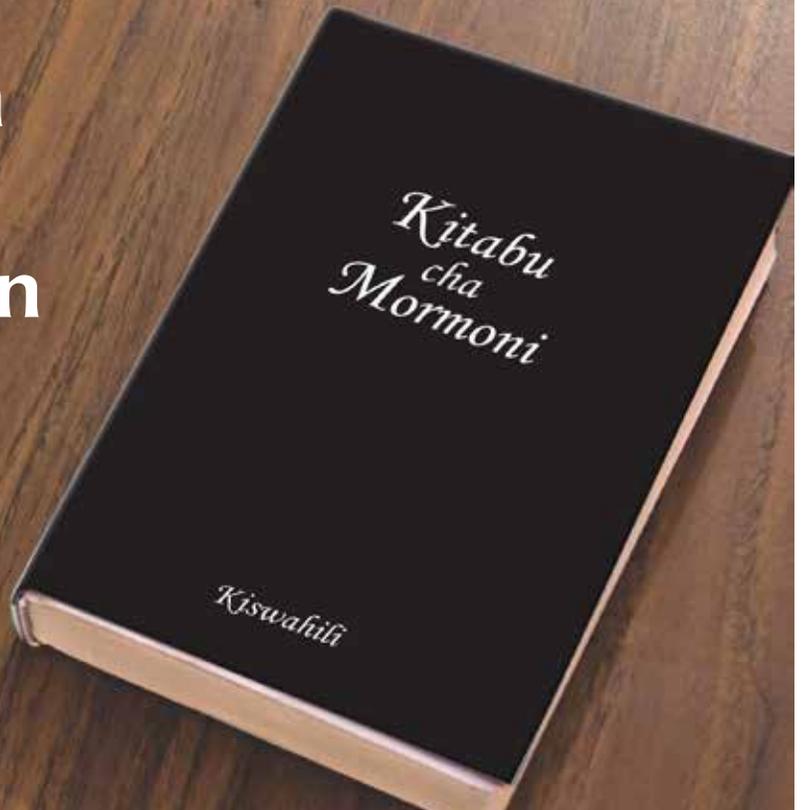
I have also seen books of testimony that have been copied just for members in the family that the blessings of the Lord can be passed down from generation to generation, that we may be able to share of the joy of acknowledging God in all things in our lives.

What can your family do for its ark of testimony? It can start with one item that you write or search for today and grow over time to be the kind of blessing of remembrance even that the Ark of the Covenant was for people of Old Testament times. †

# The Translation of the Book of Mormon into Swahili

## Part 2

By Frank Evan Frye



*(Continued from Part 1, found in Beacon Volume 8, Issue 3, pages 9-11.)*

Working together on such a notable task as the translation of the Book of Mormon into Swahili proved to be a great advantage for the project, because all left the cares of the world and concentrated on the word of the Lord for nearly a month. Few people have such an opportunity in their lifetimes. It was a wonderful experience!

The translation began on August 20, 2014, after concluding the preliminaries of setting up the camp, and continued for the next sixteen days. During that time, we had a number of challenges. The first was when a laptop (with a spent battery) was accidentally unplugged from its power source while one of the teams was working on it and the entire document was lost. It was a hard lesson to learn how important it is to save one's work frequently. Several short power failures slowed the work because most of the batteries on the laptops only lasted an hour or two without an outside electrical source. Then came the day when the power went off for most of the day. Quick thinking by some of the team members made it possible to contact key people in the power and light industry. By mid-afternoon that day, technicians arrived and fixed the problem and everyone was back to work.

Another challenge that plagued the Windows machines was a virus attack. Someone had gotten on the Internet with their machine to look up a Swahili word and, without knowing it, downloaded a virus. That was

passed from one of the thumb drives back to my Mac laptop. My laptop was not infected, but that same thumb drive was passed on to other laptops as more chapters were finished and they got infected. Fortunately, several of the young men had sufficient experience to know what to do. Some of the documents were damaged more than others, but eventually all was made right again and the work continued.

As we got about half done with the translation, it became apparent that my planned time in Kenya was not sufficient and it had to be extended by about another ten days. That had to be done in advance to avoid excess ticketing fees. Brother Tom helped me go to an Internet cafe several times where I called and wrote our travel agent in Independence to change the ticket.

The last chapters to be finished of the initial translation were on September 4, 2014. By that time, many of the men had to return home. Brother Tom Okeyo planned a dedication service which took place the next day with a number of invited guests. A ram was slaughtered and cooked for a traditional meal. All the team members were provided with CDs and DVDs of study materials to take home with them. Later they were presented with certificates thanking them for the work that they had done.

Six members of the translation teams were able to stay on at the facilities for another week in order to re-

view all the chapters that had been translated. It was important to make sure that the reviewing teams were not the same as those who had translated that which was being reviewed. That way it was less likely for errors to be overlooked. In this way, the entire Book of Mormon was translated in sixteen days and it was all reviewed in another week. What an enormous task!

Now that my time was up, I took the seven-hour bus ride from Kisumu back to Nairobi. Kisumu is on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria just a few miles south of the equator and its altitude is about 3600 feet. At that altitude and right on the equator, temperatures there can be quite warm. We climbed to between 6200 feet and 7000 feet where there are enormous tea plantations that I'm sure used to be British owned and may have provided tea for the Boston Tea Party—who knows? They are trimmed about waist high with narrow paths that checkerboard the mountainsides to the horizon. They have the appearance of enormous golf courses divided into blocks with narrow trenches. But of course, how would you find the golf ball—even if you could hit it in the waist-high tea plants?

We continued on up to about 8000 feet where the temperature was quite chilly at around 60° F at noon. Then we began to descend into the Great Rift Valley that is a geologic fault line that runs from central Africa all the way through the Holy Land, which is straight north of Kenya. We had a 20-minute stop at Nakuru (altitude 5800 feet) where we have a group of church members. I had the opportunity to meet them and spend several days in teaching ministry with them in 2010, but did not get to see them on this trip.

Nakuru is famous for a game preserve where diminutive rock hyrax, or conie, abounds. It was made famous because fossilized skeletons of the supposed evolutionary ancestor of the horse, called “eohippus” (dawn horse) was first named “hyracotherium” because it looked so much like skeletons of the rock hyrax. If it looks like a hyrax—then maybe it really was one. I got to see and photograph several of them in 2010. This time all I saw was a sign telling about them.

As we climbed up out of the Rift Valley, I was sitting next to a nun on the bus and she told me that the land on the right side of the bus was still owned by the British royal family and is kept as a game preserve. In the distance we could see a brine lake with thousands of pink flamingos standing in enormous flocks and flying around its shore. A little further on up the mountain and we saw zebras, antelope and warthogs between 30 and 100 yards off the side of the road. I managed to get a few photos of some from the speeding bus window.

Later we saw small herds of sheep and goats as we climbed up into a pine forest. The roadside grass was grazed very short, giving the appearance of a lush green park. At 8400 feet, it was raining and cold. Then we began to descend into the Nairobi valley. At 7900 feet, the rain had stopped but it was still cold. At 7400 feet it was warming up again and we saw flocks of geese and turkeys alongside the road.

In many places along the road there were tiny vegetable stands where they sold cabbage, carrots, potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, etc. There was evidence of Christianity everywhere. Signs on trucks or on the walls of buildings might say something like “amini mungu” (believe in or have faith in God). Christian churches abound in every town. Many common denominations seen in America are there also, but alongside them can be seen Coptic Catholic churches as well as mosques where the Islamic way of life is taught. Some of their adherents are openly aggressive and may publicly challenge Christians in Kenya on the street with questions meant to shock and dismay the unprepared. Islam arrived in Kenya between the eighth and tenth centuries. While Christianity arrived in northern Africa during the first two centuries after Christ, Protestant Christianity arrived in East Africa in 1844.

Arriving in Nairobi, the altitude was about 5300 feet and it was warmer. Nairobi is a city of over six million people and I had no way to contact anyone, but was told that someone would pick me up at the bus station. After about an hour, two of the men who were part of the first translation teams, James Yogo and



The translation teams set up bedframes at the facility in the outskirts of Kisumu, Kenya, before translation began in 2014.

Bob Ouma, found me at the corner of the bus station and helped me carry my luggage to their van and then took me to James' home, where his wife, Ruth, had prepared a welcome supper for us all. Around eleven o'clock they took me to the airport where I discovered that my flight had been delayed. That caused me to miss my connection from Amsterdam to Detroit. I was re-routed to Atlanta for another layover, which would make me arrive in Kansas City many hours later than expected. With no way to contact Patti, a nice lady at the ticket counter provided a cell phone that allowed me to call home to advise my family of the changes. Forty-two hours after leaving Eric and Pamela's home I arrived at the Kansas City airport where Patti and Sariah met me and took me home to finally get some rest.

Every one of the team members testified of the life changing experience that had happened during the weeks that we lived and worked together. None of them had been together that long before—especially in such an intense Scripture study. I was blessed by their fellowship wherever I went and appreciated their love and concern for me, but I especially appreciated their love for the Restored Gospel. While there, I laid out the structure for the translation of a few other documents such as tracts and testimonies so that they could also be translated as the Saints could make time to do so. We even bought paper, had it cut and printed a couple of tracts that were translated just before I left.

It would be wonderful if each of the team members could share his (or her) testimony in these publications. For lack of space I feel it important to at least mention their names (alphabetically): Edwin Awiti, Efgo Lawis, Paul Makawiti, Nelson Mutai, Paul Ogada, Eli Okecha, Fred Okecha, Mercy Okeyo, Tom Okeyo, Mishael Onyiego, Bob Ouma and James Yogo. Thank you brethren for your dedication and hard work.

It was their desire that a report such as this be written and published in both the *Tidings of Zion* and the *Beacon*. It is their hope and faith that the Saints in the land of Zion will get back together and obey the Lord's counsel to all of us: "Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine" (D&C 38:6a, also see John 17:17–23).

Several tasks remain to complete the work. Someone must design the layout of the book so that when the text is ready, it can be "poured" into the shell book by book. While that is being done, it is necessary to have one or more of the team members read the Swahili back into English to a person that is knowledgeable about both language translation and the Book of Mormon. It is hoped that this can be done via Skype between Kenya and Independence. This is to verify that all the things that we have worked to make sure are in the translation have been done correctly. When that final review is completed, the text will be placed in the book design, and the details of the type of paper, kind of binding and where the printing will be done will also have to be finalized. And of course, the funds necessary to do all of this will need to be raised.

A final word about who might use this translation of the Book of Mormon. We know that the Book of Mormon is to testify of God's covenants and blessings to the "Lamanites which are a remnant of the house of Israel, and also to Jew and Gentile." It is to convince the world "that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations" (Book of Mormon, Title Page.) We are also aware of the common belief that many of the people in East Africa are of Israelite origin, as well as some in West Africa and South Africa. Many of those people speak Swahili and will benefit from this translation.

For many years we have looked for ways to witness to the Islamic people of the world. They have become increasingly aggressive against Christians, Jews and the Bible. The Book of Mormon speaks of the "Plates of Brass" 33 times. They are to have a special witness to the world before the end (1 Nephi 1:159–170, Alma 17:32–51). They have been preserved by the hand of the Lord so that he "might show forth his power in them to future generations"



The three revision teams after the first translation was finished, including cooks and other help.

(Alma 17:50). The Brass Plates were brought from Jerusalem before it fell to the Babylonians around 600 B.C. They are described as being written in Egyptian (Mosiah 1:6). These plates contain many prophetic books found in the Bible and some books which are not included in our Bible (3 Nephi 4:71–73).

In particular, Joseph, who was sold to Ishmaelites by his brothers and carried as a slave into Egypt, is said to have written a number of great prophecies which are found on the Brass Plates (2 Nephi 3:1–5). Joseph would have been educated how to read and write in Egyptian when he became a ruler there, and perhaps years before while in prison. He may have been the first to write on the Brass Plates. Many generations later Moses was educated in Egypt. He wrote the first five books of the Bible and these, we are told, are contained on the Brass Plates (1 Nephi 1:159). The history from the creation until the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah is recorded on them (1 Nephi 1:159–161).

There is a special prophecy in the Bible that I believe speaks to this very situation:

**In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.**

**And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.**

**And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.**

**And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it; and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.**

**In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.**

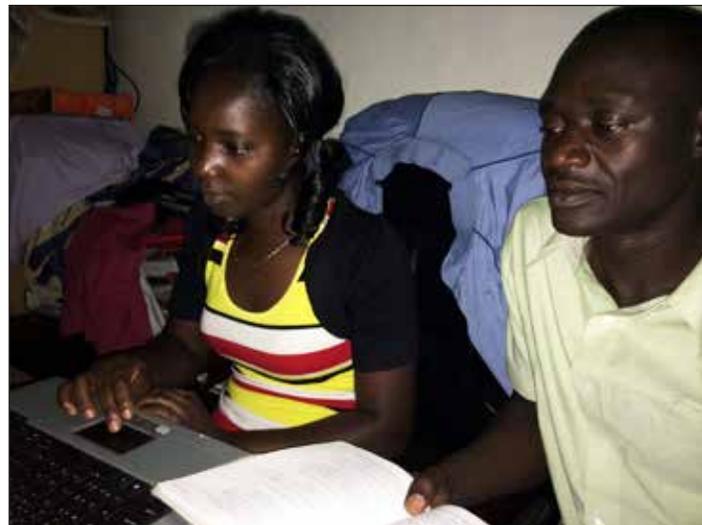
**In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land;**

**Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance (Isaiah 19:19–25).**

Can there be any doubt as to which ethnic group of people these scripture verses refer? It is clearly the nations of Islam. The Lord will remember these nations and “send them a savior.” Who can that be but Jesus Christ the Messiah! The printing of the Book of Mormon into the language of many of these people may be a catalyzing factor for these nations to look to their true Redeemer.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have set a precedent for the discovery of how ancient documents must be treated. It will no longer be tolerated for so-called experts to hide them behind closed doors for 40 years. The discovery of the Brass Plates which are written in Egyptian will draw worldwide attention to the rest of the promises of the Lord and to the identity of the true Messiah who was born of a virgin, ministered in the Land of Jerusalem 2000 years ago, died and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven with the promise to return.

Imagine the impact that will have upon the Jews—a copy of their own holy book found in Mesoamerica! How will it impact the Arab people—a copy of the Jewish Bible written in Egyptian! How will it impact Christians and atheists alike? This will be a world changing event, and our combined effort to translate the Book of Mormon into the language of many Islamic nations that has taken so many years may very well serve as a convincing witness to the descendants of Ishmael, also a son of Abraham (half brother of Isaac and father of many of the Islamic people around the world), that Jesus Christ is their true redeemer. †



Mercy Okeyo and Paul Makawiti work together on the translation.

More information may be obtained by contacting the ARM board at:  
ARM Board  
20509 E Courtney-Atherton Rd.,  
Independence, MO  
64058



# Legislative Action at the Conference

By Alan Smith

Approval of ordinations to the office of apostle and patriarch/evangelist, plans for a youth rally in the Center Place in 2017 and changes to conference resolutions suggested by the Organizational Analysis committee that was to review the current JCRB resolutions, were among the items handled in the business session at the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches General Conference held April 10-16, in Independence, Mo.

In addition, budgets were passed, officers and committees elected, and a call to the office of Seventy approved by delegates and members, participating from 17 countries and 44 branches.

## Ordinations Approved

In response to an inspired message (revelation) brought to the conference by conference president Fred Greene, a resolution was approved by the conference authorizing the ordination of several people to the offices of apostle and patriarch/evangelist. This measure was the most discussed item during the business meeting.

A substitute motion that would have postponed any action until the message and “talking points” about it had been shared with the participating branches, was defeated. The resolution providing for the ordinations was approved.

Authorization was given for the ordination of Gary Whiting and Randy Vick to the office of Apostle and for Neil Simmons, Jerry Vickery, Dan Sherer, and Ron Smith to the office of Evangelist/Patriarch.

Also approved in a separate conference action was the ordination of Erwin Schnettler of Penaflor, Santiago, Chile, to the office of Seventy.

The ordinations of all but Brother Vickery were carried out in a service on the closing morning of the conference.

## Youth Rally Planned

A resolution was approved by the conference to organize a Restoration youth rally in 2017 seeking to involve as many Restoration youth groups as possible. The youth committee chairman Chris Taylor, along with a youth representative, would partner with youth leaders and youth representatives from other Restoration groups on a committee to plan the event.

The idea for the youth rally grew out of the U.S. national conference in October and was brought by the Quorum of High Priests to the conference.

## Resolution review

Several changes to conference resolutions were approved as a result of a report generated by one of the working committees developed during the Organizational Analysis process that the conference went through in 2015.

Among the resolutions approved by the conference were:

- Resolution noting that general conference would be formatted in lower case letters in all conference resolutions to indicate that this

There is a fund set up  
to assist with

## International Delegate Travel

to the General Conference.

Send Contributions to:

JRCB/Delegate Travel Fund,

1100 West Truman Road,

Independence, MO 64050 (USA)

Please note on your check

the funds are for

International Delegate Travel.

was “a general conference” and not the exclusive “General Conference” of the church.

- Resolution moving 39 current resolutions to an “Archived Resolution” section because they are no longer binding on the conference due to timing or being replaced by another resolution. The provision was also made that when the conditions of a resolution expire, or new legislation makes the resolution no longer binding, that the Secretary be authorized to archive the resolution with the approval of the other JCRB officers without further conference action.
- Resolution editing some of the current resolutions to make them consistent with correct references or other wording.
- Resolution clarifying the wording of JCR#13 “Church exists where saints are organized according to the pattern.”

## Conference Schedule Change Defeated

The Logistics Committee brought a resolution calling for the general conference to be held every two years instead of annually, citing a better use of financial and personal resources in a bi-annual setting as opposed to a yearly conference.

This resolution was defeated and, as a result of discussion, a much larger number of people will serve on the Logistics Committee for the 2017 conference.

## Officers elected

Officers for the conference in the interim period until the next conference were also named during the session.

Fred Greene will serve as president, Dan Sherer as vice president, Alan Smith as secretary, Nathan Sherer as treasurer, and Doug Patterson as recorder. Jerry Vickery continues to serve his term as historian.

More than 50 people were named to various committees that work on conference business from finances to conference planning and from education to women’s and youth ministries.

## Budgets passed

An important part of the work of the conference is to set budgets for the work during the fiscal year, and for the conference itself.

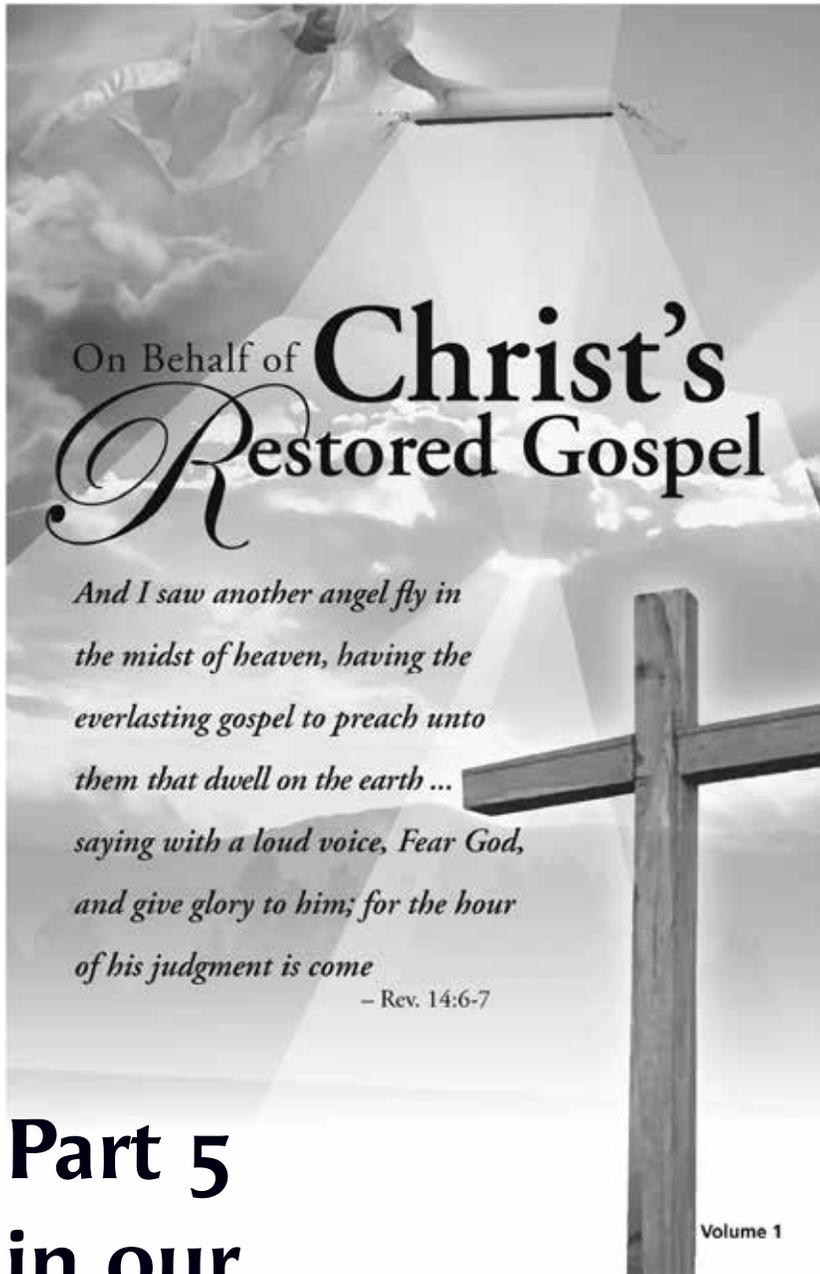
The budget for the conference, which includes \$19,660 for delegate travel from countries outside of the United States, totaled \$28,220. This money is raised from contributions outside of the annual general conference budget.

The budget for the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches for the year totaled \$606,268. This included a total of \$347,768 for missionary efforts led by the Seventy and another \$40,000 for Missionary Funding Committee spending. Also included was \$30,000 for roof repair on the conference office. †

## Save the Date!

The US National Conference is scheduled for October 13-15, in Independence, Mo., USA. If you have not been receiving email invites of our conferences, you may subscribe at <http://tinyurl.com/hhglgsx>.





On Behalf of **Christ's**  
*R*estored Gospel

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth ... saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come*  
— Rev. 14:6-7

Volume 1

**Part 5**  
**in our**  
**continuing**  
**series**

**Answers to “Forty Provocative Questions”, Continued**

*By Jim Reeves and Jon Tandy*

*[Editor’s note: Book of Mormon page numbers refer to the RLDS 1908 version, 1953 printing. Web addresses were updated to reflect current versions of the websites. Footnotes were moved into the text and scripture references were modified to match our standard.]*

9. Why does the Book of Ether say that the language of the Jaredites was not confounded at the tower of Babel, when Genesis states that the Lord confounded all the languages of the earth at that time? (Genesis 11:6, I.V., Book of Mormon, Ether 1:7-11).

The passage in Genesis 11:9 says: “Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

The reader will notice that the questioner misquoted the passage. It did not say that all of the languages were confounded, because there was only one to start with! Also, the questioner assumes that no one in that group kept the same language, and that God would not have answered the prayer of one godly person to retain his original language. This is a prime example of someone reading into scripture what is not clearly there.

Josephus notes that God’s purpose in confounding the language was not only to stop work on building Nimrod’s great tower, but also to cause colonies of people to disperse and populate the whole Earth. Many of these colonies “passed over the sea in ships” (Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Bk. I, Ch. 4-5). The Bible mentions only a few colonies that remained in the Near East region. Thus, there is no evidence to suggest that the Book of Mormon’s statements concerning the Jaredites are false.

10. *Why would Joseph Smith say Baptism for the Dead was the most “glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel?” (Doctrine and Covenants, 110:17a). Shouldn’t the most glorious subject be the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?*

Joseph Smith firmly believed in the gospel as summarized in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, which says that “first of all ... Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is expressed as the central teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, both in the Book of Mormon and in the revelations delivered by Joseph (In the Book of Mormon, see 1 Nephi 3:15; 2 Nephi 1:72-78; 2 Nephi 11:21-22; Mosiah 1:102-106; Mosiah 8:79-82; Helaman 5:68-76; Mormon 3:27; Ether 5:7. In the Doctrine and Covenants, see D&C 16:3c-d; D&C 17:5; D&C 19:3a; D&C 34:1; D&C 45:9; D&C 46:5d-e; D&C 53:2a; D&C 54:1a; D&C 76:4g).

On many occasions, Joseph Smith strongly affirmed his belief in the resurrection as being the central hope of Christianity (For instance, a letter from Joseph Smith and his counselors to the elders of the church, dated January 22, 1834, states: “God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and this He has given an assurance of in that He raised up His Son Jesus Christ from the dead—the point on which the hope of all who believe the inspired record is founded for their future happiness and enjoyment; because, ‘If Christ be not risen,’ said Paul to the Corinthians, ‘your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished’ (see 1 Cor. xv). If the resurrection from the dead be not an important point, or item in our faith, we must confess that we know nothing about it; for if there be no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not risen; and if Christ has not risen He was not the Son of God.”—*Documentary History of the Church* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company) 2:18).

Among the aspects of Christ’s gospel that were restored in the latter-day church was the revelation that those who die in sin without a knowledge of the law will be given an opportunity to receive the gospel in the next life through the ministry of the Spirit, and to accept or reject it (2 Nephi 6:51-55; Mosiah 1:107-122; D&C 45:10a; and others). The reason Joseph considered this doctrine to be most glorious was not because it was the most important aspect of salvation, but because it fostered euphoria among the Saints at finding the answer to a question that had plagued the Reformation up to that time.

The quotation does not say that baptism for the dead is the most glorious of all subjects. Joseph’s statement does not assert that baptism for the dead replaced the resurrection in importance. As an adverb, “most” is simply a superlative expression, meaning “very” or “in the highest degree”; just as in the Bible, Theophilus and Felix are both described as “most excellent” (Luke 1:3; Acts 23:26). It does not place one above the other.

11. *How could Moses, who murdered an Egyptian, appear in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration if, according to Joseph Smith, murder is an unpardonable sin? (Doctrine and Covenants 42:6, Exodus 2:12; Matthew 17:3).*

When Moses killed the Egyptian, he did so in the process of attempting to defend another human being. This could not rightly be classified as murder. Critics of the Restoration usually appeal to the fact that Paul was guilty of murder, but was subsequently forgiven when he came to faith in Christ. The passage in Section 42 addresses those who are current members of the church, believers who should know better than to commit an act of murder because they have received the truth.

**The reason Joseph considered this doctrine to be most glorious was not because it was the most important aspect of salvation, but because it fostered euphoria among the Saints at finding the answer to a question that had plagued the Reformation up to that time.**

12. *A martyr is one who willingly lays down his life for his beliefs. How could Joseph Smith have died a martyr when he fought for his life and shot three men (killing two) before being killed himself? (Mormonism: Shadow or Reality? pp. 258, 259).*

Joseph Smith was mayor of Nauvoo and captain of the Nauvoo Legion at the time of his death. Yet he and his brother, Hyrum, surrendered themselves to Constable Bettisworth of Hancock County in response to charges made against them by disgruntled members of the church. These charges were never proven in court, due to their untimely death. The governor of Illinois had pledged that the Smiths would be protected from violence and afforded a fair hearing according to the laws of the land if they would surrender willingly, which they did. While awaiting trial, they were brought from their lodging at a Carthage hotel to a room at the jail, supposedly to ensure their safety against mob violence until a proper trial could proceed (*History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 2:741-749).

In the afternoon on June 27, 1844, an armed mob of around 200 men stormed the jail and killed Joseph and Hyrum, wounding John Taylor. Despite the solemn pledge of protection and due process of law, they were murdered in cold blood. There are varied accounts of what happened in the Carthage jail when Joseph Smith was killed. One source claimed that he killed several men, while other sources state that he simply fired back in self-defense and wounded a few of the attackers. The three men who were supposedly “killed” by Joseph were later indicted for their participation in the mob action. They were never arrested, and it was reported that they subsequently left the state of Illinois (Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 52, 53, 79.).

Before being taken to Carthage, Joseph had predicted his own death. In June 1844, Joseph told a gathering of the Saints, “he was going to be offered a martyr” (*The Saints’ Herald* (February 2, 1959): 13). He told his brother Hyrum, “We must go and lay our heads on the sod, or they [the mob] will go into the city [Nauvoo] and murder the women and children” (*History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 3:765-766.). John Lawn, a nonmember of the church who was selected to guard Joseph in Carthage, testified that Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith predicted their deaths. As Mr. Lawn was leaving Carthage at the request of Governor Ford, Joseph told him, “When you and your guards leave, our fate is sealed” (*Manuscript biography of John Lawn*, qtd. in F. Edward Butterworth, *Divine Origin of the Restoration* (Chico, California: Cosmic Press, 1989), 252-253).

The critic says that Joseph could not be a martyr because he apparently defended himself, his brother, and his friends against the illegal mob action at the time of his death. This argument is faulty, not only because it contradicts the facts of Joseph’s death, but because it relies on too narrow a definition of the term “martyr.” The Random House Webster’s College Dictionary (1991) defines a martyr as:

1. a person who willingly suffers death rather than renounce his or her religion;
2. a person who is put to death or suffers on behalf of a cause;
3. a person who undergoes severe or constant suffering.

Hebrews 12:1 speaks of a great “cloud of witnesses,” referring to the list of faithful men and women given in Chapter 11. The Greek word for “witnesses” is *martus*, which also means “martyr” and is the origin of the term. Of those individuals described in Hebrews 11, only a few actually suffered death as a result of not renouncing their religion. Yet their faithful testimony of God qualified them to be called “martyr” by the author of Hebrews.

Joseph’s role as a prophet of God is true regardless of whether one considers him a martyr. Nevertheless, Latter Day Saints have good reason to

**Before being taken to Carthage, Joseph had predicted his own death ... He told his brother Hyrum, “We must go and lay our heads on the sod, or they [the mob] will go into the city [Nauvoo] and murder the women and children.”**

maintain that Joseph Smith fits the cited definition of “martyr,” not only due to the manner of his death but also the circumstances of his life. He and his family suffered many privations and persecutions because of their testimony of Jesus Christ.

*13. Why does the Book of Mormon teach that Adam and Eve could not have had children unless Adam fell? When God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, they were still in the Garden of Eden before the fall. (Book of Mormon, II Nephi 1:115; Genesis 1:30 I.V.)*

This question is answered below, in the article “Answers to Textual Criticisms of the Book of Mormon” (page 73).

*14. Why did the leadership of the RLDS church accept the “Joseph Smith III blessing” as genuine and include it as appendix G in the Doctrine and Covenants, then later have to remove it when it was discovered to be a forgery? Where was their prophetic discernment?*

Since the early days of the RLDS movement, members of the church were aware of numerous testimonies indicating that Joseph the Martyr had blessed Joseph Smith III to be his successor. In 1981, a newly discovered document was sold to the LDS Church, purporting to be a written transcript of this blessing. The RLDS Church was able to obtain the document in exchange for an original 1833 Book of Commandments, conditional on the document being judged authentic by independent authorities. Subsequent examination of the document by a paper-testing laboratory and two document examiners, not affiliated with either the LDS or RLDS churches, proved that the document was genuine (*Saints’ Herald* (June 1981): 3. *Saints’ Herald* (Aug. 1981): 10-11.).

The fact that such a document had come out of Utah, and that it had been authenticated by several independent tests, was seen by RLDS members as exciting and convincing evidence to the historic claims of the RLDS Church. The subsequent RLDS World Conference of 1982 approved the document for inclusion in an appendix to the Doctrine and Covenants. The RLDS Church accepted the document because of the available scientific facts, not on the basis of prophetic revelation. None was claimed at the time, and church leaders urged restraint in relying on the document as a “proof text,” noting that the proof of Joseph Smith III’s calling was already well established by eyewitness testimony.

Five years later, when it was discovered that the document had originated with Mark Hofmann, who was convicted of forging several alleged early manuscripts, the credibility of the “Joseph Smith III Blessing” was called into question. New evidence was obtained from a highly sophisticated test, developed after the RLDS Church had accepted the document, that it was a forgery (*Saints’ Herald* (Dec. 1987): 15-16,18). As a result, the RLDS Church removed the document from the Doctrine and Covenants once these facts became known. Though the Mark Hofmann document was apparently a very clever forgery, this does not affect the testimony of the early Saints concerning the truth of Joseph Smith III’s calling.

*15. In Lucy Mack Smith’s book, Joseph Smith and His Progenitors, (page 120), she tells of an incident where her son fought off attackers while, “running at the top of his speed” through the woods for three miles with the gold plates tucked under his arm. How could that have been possible when the plates were estimated to weigh approx. 230 pounds? Also, how could Emma Smith have moved them “...from place to place as it was necessary in doing my work”? (Saints’ Herald, October 1, 1879).*

The questioner has mistakenly equated the book of plates with a solid block of metal. The plates of the Book of Mormon consisted of a stack of thin sheets of metal bound by three rings, which had the appearance of gold,

**Though the Mark Hofmann document was apparently a very clever forgery, this does not affect the testimony of the early Saints concerning the truth of Joseph Smith III’s calling.**

**The referenced verse  
in the  
Book of Mormon  
contains a  
prophetic statement  
that eventually  
all Christian believers  
will become united  
by the power  
of the Spirit of God,  
a hope  
that is consistent  
with biblical  
principles.**

and on which were engraved the text from which Joseph Smith translated. A solid block of any metal would naturally weigh more than a block comprised of multiple sheets of thin plates made of similar material. When thin sheets of metal are placed together, there are gaps of air between them which are not present in a solid block, and which would reduce the weight significantly. In addition, the engravings on the plates also represent gaps of air in the metal sheets, reducing their weight further. These combined factors are estimated to make the weight of the plates at least half that of a solid block of metal (B. Mildred Smith, "Possible Weight of the Plates of the Book of Mormon," *The Witness* (Oct. 1988): 6, 12-13).

According to the Book of Mormon, the "ore" that was used to make the plates may have consisted of silver and copper, in addition to gold (1 Nephi 5:217-218). Yet, witnesses of the Book of Mormon described them as having the "appearance of gold" ("Testimony of the Eight Witnesses," found in every edition of the Book of Mormon). It has been learned that Native American Indians in Central America and South America knew how to make metal sheets as an alloy of gold, silver, and copper, referred to as Tumbaga gold. These thin sheets were annealed in such a way as to give them the appearance of pure gold. Such an alloy weighs considerably less than an equal volume of pure gold (Heather Lechtman, "Pre-Columbian Surface Metallurgy," *Scientific American* (June 1984): 56, 60).

The testimonies of those who actually lifted the Book of Mormon plates estimated their weight to be approximately 60 pounds [William Smith, the prophet's brother, estimated them to be "about sixty pounds" (*Saints' Herald* (October 4, 1884): 644). Martin Harris estimated the plates to weigh between 40 and 60 pounds (*Tiffany's Monthly* 1859, 2:165-166)]. These testimonies are in line with the estimated weight of plates made with gold alloy, assuming that the plates of the stated dimensions could have been made of something like Tumbaga gold. The fact that ancient inhabitants of Central America knew how to make lightweight gold plates, using the same three metals described in the Book of Mormon and giving them the appearance of pure gold, is convincing evidence that historical accounts given by Joseph Smith and the witnesses are true.

16. *The Book of Mormon states that there are only two churches, the church of God and the church of the devil. If the RLDS Church is the only true church (thus the church of God), does that mean that all other Christians (sic) churches make up "the church of the devil?" (Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi, 3:220-222).*

Revelation received by Joseph Smith states that the church is the only church with which the Lord was "well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually" (Doctrine and Covenants 1:5e). This is understood to mean that the church as originally organized in the latter-day Restoration movement is the only one that is patterned after the church Christ established, in doctrine, spiritual gifts, and authority. It does not mean, as the critic supposes, that other Christian denominations are the "church of the devil." Neither the RLDS nor any other denomination is specifically mentioned in the verse in 1 Nephi.

The referenced verse in the Book of Mormon contains a prophetic statement that eventually all Christian believers will become united by the power of the Spirit of God, a hope that is consistent with biblical principles (John 17:21-23; Ephesians 1:10; Romans 11:25-27). The Book of Mormon promises that the gentiles who do not unite with the church of the devil will find an inheritance in Zion. †

# Into All the World

## The Life After Death Booth

By Jim Noland

In just over three years, more than 4,000 people, all persons over eight years of age, have completed the tour through the mobile Life After Death (LAD) booth.

The booth was created and sponsored by the Devon Park Branch in Independence, Mo., in 2013 at a cost of just under \$5000. With many donations from other Saints throughout the United States, we have been able to purchase a six feet by 12 feet trailer so the booth can now be easily moved from place to place and set up in many different locations.

The booth has been shown at the Santa-Cali-Gon festival in Independence, Mo.; the Geneseo Family Reunion in Illinois and at the Cornerstone of Zion visitor center in Nauvoo, Ill. We plan to take the booth to several other lo-

cations throughout the autumn of this year and hope to continue to take it all over the U.S. over the next several years.

The booth is a 10 feet by 20 feet walk-through tour expounding on the wonderful insights of eternal life as revealed in the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The booth features high-gloss pictures depicting the many aspects of eternal life with scripture references included. It is well-lighted and has fans in the ceiling to keep the guest as comfortable as possible in the summer heat. Twelve hours of class instruction is given to those who become tour guides.

Several have said, "This is the greatest and easiest witnessing tool that I have ever seen." Several Protestant pastors commented that

"This is the best thing we have seen to tell the story of eternal life." They also said, "We need more of this kind of witnessing."

The booth has touched the lives of many visitors. There are so many testimonies it is hard to know where to begin. I believe the most rewarding moment is when those who thought they could never be forgiven or there was no hope or believed God did not love them, realized, with tears running down their faces, God does love them and is willing to forgive them upon their repentance. Many have come out of the booth saying, "Wow, I didn't expect anything like this."

If you would like to have the booth come to your area, please contact Seventy James Noland at 816-373-8684 or [james@christiansoup.com](mailto:james@christiansoup.com). †



**Unable to attend a branch on Sunday?**  
These websites provide live streaming or recordings of services or meetings.

[www.ConferenceOfBranches.org](http://www.ConferenceOfBranches.org)

[www.IndependenceDistrict.org](http://www.IndependenceDistrict.org)

[www.SaintsHaven.org](http://www.SaintsHaven.org)

[www.ZarahemlaBranch.org](http://www.ZarahemlaBranch.org)

[www.ZionsOutpost.org](http://www.ZionsOutpost.org)

[www.ustream.tv/channel/Devon-Park](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/Devon-Park)

[www.waldoavenuerestorationbranch.org/index.php](http://www.waldoavenuerestorationbranch.org/index.php)

**Send us your testimonies**

How has the Gospel changed your life? Write 200 to 1000 words and send them to [beacon@conferenceofbranches.org](mailto:beacon@conferenceofbranches.org) or JCRB/Beacon, 1100 West Truman Road, Independence, MO 64050

## Bishop's Corner

## Deacon Goodentart Has A Dream

By Elbert A. Smith

*Excerpt from Blue Pencil Notes (Herald House, Independence, Missouri:1942).  
Pages 187-190.*

**And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matthew 25:41).**

“I had a dream last night,” said Deacon Goodentart to his wife, during the morning meal. “I dreamed you and I appeared at the pearly gates.”

“You mean we, that is we had—?”

“I suppose so. Anyway we were there. Saint Peter seemed different than I had expected. He seemed very human—in fact there was a sort of twinkle in his eyes at times. He said, ‘Deacon, I think you can get in and we may have some work for you, there are not so many deacons here as you might think; but how about your wife? What can she do?’”

“Did he ask that about me?”

“Yes, and I said, ‘Well she might help you at the gate. I have read in the Bible that many come here through great tribulation, and she would be right handy at comforting them. And she would be fine to look after newcomers who feel lonesome and afraid when they first get here. She is a good friendly visitor. Trouble is she would let everyone in—she never could turn anyone away from her own door.’”

“Then Saint Peter looked rather sad, and said to me, ‘That is one hard thing for me to do; but there are a lot of people who would not be happy here if they got in; we don’t have the sort of night life and high life they like; no road houses, high balls, Sunday ball games, crooked politics, and no one steals the gold off the golden streets. Anyway, if we let them in they would soon turn heaven into—a different sort of place.’”

“Then Saint Peter said, ‘Can

your wife sing?’ And I said, ‘Probably she would not make a soloist in your big heavenly choruses, but if you sing old-fashioned hymn tunes up here, like “Rock of Ages,” or the “Old, Old Path,” she will do fine. She was always singing at home about her work. If you have any of the very little angels who miss their mothers, she would be a master hand at singing lullabys, and if any of them tear their little white robes she is fine at mending, you would never know they had been torn.’”

“Did you talk to him about my mending?”

“Why yes, Christ talked about mending garments, a cup of cold water—all that sort of thing. Then I said, ‘I have read about many mansions up here, but I don’t know about a mansion—maybe you have a little white cottage or bungalow we could occupy. On earth my wife always put a little bit of heaven into her home—and I don’t see why she might not put a little home into heaven.’”

“Then Saint Peter said, ‘I wrote a couple of epistles once. I never could write like my friend Saint Paul, he loved to write and he went to school to Gamaliel while I fished, so he was better educated. But I did write two epistles. Do you remember the first chapter of my second epistle?’ And I said, ‘Yes, that is one of my favorite chapters—it has a sort of problem in spiritual mathematics, one in addition, add to your faith virtue, and so on.’ And Saint Peter said, ‘Yes, the cross of Christ is the sign of addition.’ So I said, ‘Well I have tried

to add one to another all those virtues, and as for my wife, she always had them since I have known her, which is quite some time now. You know how I first met her?’ But Saint Peter interrupted me, ‘Yes I know all about that, what I wanted to say is that in that chapter I wrote: “So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly.” And I said, ‘That is the way we want to enter, or not at all. We never were any hands to go where we were not welcome.’”

“What was I doing all this time?” asked Sister Goodentart.

“Now that is rather singular, you had discovered a poor cripple who was trying to climb up the slope to the pearly gates. You called me and we got one on either side and put a hand under his armpits and helped him along. When we stood before Saint Peter he looked at the poor cripple and said, ‘Come in and bring your crutches with you.’ So the gates were swung wide open and we stepped inside. I had one look at the heavenly city. I saw a few people I knew. Brother F. G. Pitt was teaching a group of people to sing, ‘God Is So Good to Me,’ and I saw Brother Joseph and others.

“But a funny thing had happened: the poor cripple suddenly disappeared and in his place stood a man very tall and straight. A better looking man than I had ever seen. He had brown hair and beard and I noticed on his white robe a few clean shavings, such as sometimes stick to a carpenter’s apron. I have seen his picture somewhere. He said to us both, ‘Inasmuch’—and then I woke up.”

“I wish we could have seen that little white cottage,” sighed Sister Goodentart.

“Well, so do I, and still I am quite happy here in this little cottage so long as you are here.” †

## Oscar and Hubert Case

By Joy Muir

While seated in the JCRB office a few weeks ago cleaning out the file cabinet, I ran across one of my treasures, a recording of Oscar and Hubert Case singing, “The Old Old Path” and sharing a few inspiring thoughts. I mentioned it to the ladies in the office and Jan Jordison shared about the time she was administered to by the brothers. I asked her if she would share it with all of you and here it is.

### Testimony of Jan Jordison

In 1965 I was pregnant with my third child and staying with my sister in Independence, Mo., for a few days. I became deathly ill with the flu and asked my brother-in-law, Clint, if he would find someone to administer to me. He later called from work to say the Case brothers (Oscar and Hubert) would be stopping by. I knew they were “old time missionaries,” but had never met them.

I remember vividly when they arrived at the house. They came right in, confident and of quick step. One of them offered a prayer and then said, “Let’s sing a song!” He sat down at the piano and began playing a hymn, which we all sang—my sister, Carol Armstrong, joining us as well.

Following this, they administered to me for the flu, from which I later recovered quite quickly. After they administered to me, they said they would like to offer a special blessing for the baby I was carrying. During the prayer, I felt my son respond within me and I was left with a great sense of peace. I have always felt this blessing made a big difference in his life, and that he was preserved through many temptations and trials that he faced.

These spunky servants of God had a presence about them. It was unique. Even though they were small in terms of physical stature, it was like they were giants. I knew they were men of God. They were joyous and there was a very strong spirit that accompanied them. When they came in, they immediately took charge. It was unlike anything I had previously experienced—it felt as though the Lord had walked in with them. It was a powerful experience to see men like that filled with the authority of the Lord. They carried it in their countenances. They were like Moroni, because of the lives they lived and the things they did, they carried the Lord with them.

I count it a blessing to have had the opportunity to be in their presence and to be blessed by them. †



Above: Oscar Case, July 25, 1968.

Below: Hubert Case, 1920s, and other members



### About the Case Brothers

(from <https://saintshistorychannel.wordpress.com/2009/03/10/0610-world-church-author-unknown-hubert-and-oscar-case-2011>)

The Case brothers served as missionaries for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for many years. Oscar Case also served as president of the Spokane Washington District in the early to mid-1920s. The Case brothers were among the most well-known missionaries in the Reorganization at the turn of the twentieth century. They served in the South Sea Islands and in much of the United States. Hubert was among the first to sail to French Polynesia on the church-owned boat, *The Evanelia*, which means “Gospel Boat.” The Case brothers were also well-known for their successful ministry to Native Americans, during which they baptized hundreds among the Sac, Fox, Iowa, Oto, Omaha and Cheyenne tribes. On his 100th birthday, Oscar preached at a service in Independence, Mo., with about three thousand people in attendance. Hubert died in 1969 and Oscar in 1977.

# Establishing a Godly Home

By Karen Bates

Are you a peculiar person? Are you teaching your children to be a peculiar treasure? When the life choices we made, the way we dressed, the way we spoke and the way we lived made us seem unusual, distinctive, uncommon to other people, my dad would smile and encourage us that we belonged exclusively to Jesus Christ and that is exactly what God wanted us to be, “peculiar.”

The word “peculiar” in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word *segullâh*. Its root came from “shutting up wealth.” It means something special, a unique treasure, belonging to one person—in this case the Lord.

**Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine (Exodus 19:5).**

From this scripture we glean that if we truthfully obey the Lord's voice and keep his covenant we will be peculiar. Deuteronomy 26:18 reiterates that we must hearken to the Lord and states that we must walk in God's ways by keeping God's statutes, commandments and judgments with all our heart and soul, to be his peculiar people. This truth was simply and frequently stated in our home: “Be in the world, but not of it” (D&C 128:8b).

As my husband and I began to establish a home of our own, I realized the truth of the modern proverb “You don't stumble on righteousness, you have to foster it in your home.” I wanted to know what I could do to establish a Godly home with its chambers filled with the “precious” and “pleasant riches” of “wisdom” and “understanding” (Proverbs 24:3-4).

Scripture tells us that “slothfulness” and “idleness” will destroy a

home. And I certainly did not want the roof falling in, as the scripture indicates that it would (Ecclesiastes 10:18). The prophet Jeremiah warns us, “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong” (Jeremiah 22:13). We know that “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psalms 127:1).

So what do we do first? The scriptures give us some direction for goal setting and application. Here are three scriptures that tell us what to do first.

## 1. Seek First the Kingdom of God

Scripture clearly states that we are not to seek the things of this world. Instead we are to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:38, 3 Nephi 6:11). The scriptures tell us that Jesus was sent to preach the Kingdom of God and did preach it in every city and village where he went (Luke 4:43, 8:1-2). The apostles and the seventy were sent also to preach the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2; Luke 10:1, 8-9).

So what is this Kingdom of God that was of first importance to God and his commission to his son and the followers of his Son? From the beginning we are told that our inheritance is in the Kingdom of God if we will repent, be born again, and become as a little child (Genesis 6:59; Alma 3:89, 5:24; 3 Nephi 5:40). This means “being born of God, changed” from the carnal fallen state, “to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters ...” (Mosiah 11:187-188). The carnal state that we are putting off is described as “the works of the flesh” and “disobedience” in Galatians

5:19-20 and Ephesians 5:1-7. Many of the things that reflect this carnal and disobedient state are listed in these two scriptures.

However, we read that “the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness” and the fruits of the Spirit are listed (Galatians 5:22-26 & Ephesians 5:9-10). Simply stated: The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). First, we have to build our own relationship with God, look for the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and put the Kingdom of God first in all we do.

## 2. Seek to Obtain God's Word - Keep the Commandments - Love God and Your Neighbor

We are told in modern day revelation that our work is to keep God's commandments and to first seek to obtain God's word (D&C 10:10a). Some people say “Oh no, not a check list!” We are not talking about a checklist. However, God knew that the natural man was an enemy to God (Mosiah 1:119) and could not receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). So God gave us “don't cross these” guidelines so that as we put off the natural man through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and are born again, we do not have to lean to our own carnal understanding of what it means to love God and our neighbor.

We are told in scripture that to love God is to keep the commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23). Jesus

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set the example in this, stating that Satan has no power over him because he loves God by doing what God commands (John 15:30-31).

The Apostle John put it very simply “this is love, that we walk after the commandments” (2 John 1:6, also 1 John 5:2-3). As we follow the commandments we learn what it is to love and we recognize that breaking the commandments is selfishness and pride, denying God, and harming others. We know that loving God and our neighbor is fulfilling the law (Matthew 22:35-39, Romans 13:8-10) and love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10). We also learn that proving God’s promises in his word, in love, means we were keeping the commandments (D&C 1:7). Now Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, 2 Nephi 11:110, D&C 59 and all the other commandments take on new meaning as we understand these and all the words of God in light of God’s love for us and his desire for us to truly love as he loves. We learn from this, that the only way we can truly love our spouse and our children is to keep the commandments of God.

So what does all this mean for us? We need to “obtain God’s word” to find and prove the promises of God. In this way, we will be keeping the commandments—loving God, and our neighbor, which includes our parents, siblings, spouse and children, as God intended us to love. Teaching our children light and truth was so important, even “pleasing,” to God that he set people apart in the early church to: “do the work of printing, and of selecting, and writing books for schools, in this church, that little children also may receive instruction before me as is pleasing unto me” (D&C 55:2a).

Regular scripture study, the study of good books and faithful implementation of the word is a must if our roof is to stay intact (D&C 85:36a, Colossians 3:16). That is why we must “lay up these my (God’s) words in your heart and in your soul” (Deuteronomy 11:18).

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## Guidance for a Zion Home

The Lord answered a prayer for direction about making our home Zion by opening the following scriptures: Mosiah 2:21-29 and Alma 17:65-70. Here we see some of the directions as the two scriptures, which overlap in instruction, are combined.

### Love God, Become Subject to God’s Laws

- Love the Lord your God
- Believe in God and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ
- Recognize the greatness of God—be humble
- Pray daily in the name of Jesus—pray for all your support
- Have faith on Jesus Christ—be steadfast and withstand temptation with faith on Jesus
- Keep the laws of God. Four examples are:
  - Make and keep righteous covenants (marriage: D&C 111)
  - Be good stewards, accountable in everything (tithing: Malachi 3:10)
  - Self-discipline (keep the body clean for it is a temple) 1 Corinthians 6:19 (Word of Wisdom: D&C 86)
  - Keep the Lord’s day holy (D&C 59:2f-h)
  - Keep God’s commandments

### Love Your Neighbor

- Live peacefully—no mind to injure one another—do not fight and quarrel
- Cease to find fault one with another
- Give people what is justly theirs
- Do not be jealous (covetous) (Ezekiel 18:5, 9)
- Clothe and feed your children. Do not be idle or unclean (Ephesians 6:14, D&C 26:3e; 2 Nephi 13:30, 14:4)
- Serve one another
- Never be weary of good works

### Live in the truth

- Be truthful
- Be sober—showing self-control, solemn
- Have an everlasting hatred of sin and iniquity (Love the person, hate the sin that hurts them)

### Consecrate Everything to The Lord

- Do everything unto the Lord. Going to bed and getting up.
- Be thankful (Colossians 3:23).
- Go everywhere you go in the Lord.
- Direct your thoughts toward the Lord.
- Ask the Lord’s counsel in all you do (also 2 Nephi 14:12).

### Always Rejoice! (Mosiah 2:22)

- Promise: You will be filled with the love of God

### 3. “Let my army become very great, and let it be sanctified before me ... Let us become subject unto her laws.”

The world will be constrained to acknowledge that the kingdom of Zion is in very deed the kingdom of our God and his Christ (D&C 102:9).

In modern day revelation there is a scripture that directs some of the leaders in the church to first set their houses in order. We can glean guidance from what the Lord directed them to do (D&C 90:6-7). We know that it is a commandment that we are to bring our children up in “light and truth,” for it is light and truth that forsakes the wicked one. We also learn that it is through disobedience that the wicked one takes away light and truth, and that this can be the cause of affliction.

So in our families we have to walk in the Lord’s ways with all our heart, might, mind and strength. That is an “always” thing. Not just on Sunday morning. We need to walk after the commandments of God in obedience and teach our children to be obedient to those commandments. There are scriptures that tell us some specifics of what we are to teach our children.

The gospel was taught from the beginning and we are told in Genesis 6:59 to teach our children the plan of salvation (Genesis 6:51-65), the doctrine of Christ (D&C 68:4a-c). We are admonished in Deuteronomy to diligently teach our children to love God and to keep His words by talking about them when we sit in our house, when we are walking, when we lie down and get up (Deuteronomy 6:7, 11:19). Sitting, walking, lying down or getting up covers our whole day. Do we relate everything we do to the love of God and his love for us? Every moment of our day?

This is essential in establishing a Godly home. We are to give thanks in all things (D&C 95:1a). Where does true joy come from? From the love of the Lord. This means that when hurtful, awful, maybe calamitous things happen, we are praying, not fainting (Luke 18:1). We are thanking the Lord for

what He can and will do, as we place everything in His hands and rejoice. For God is the giver of good gifts (Matthew 7:20).

It also helps us examine how we approach life. Are we expressing the joy of our commitment to the Lord’s work? Joy in giving of ourselves and our substance so that the “sheep” can be found? Joy in sharing together with our brothers and sisters in Christ? Joy in making and keeping covenants? Joy in walking with God? Or rather, are we complaining and grumbling about this offense or that misstep by our church family and turning our rejoicing to the things of the world? Having joy in the Lord is a mark of having the Holy Spirit in our lives. Have we ceased to complain and truly been converted to Jesus Christ? Men are that they might have joy (2 Nephi 1:115).

“Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 19:74) is often repeated in our home. D&C 85:36-38 is a scripture that can guide us in establishing a Godly home. A summary of the scripture that instructs us to establish a house of God follows. This is referring to our church home; however, the pattern will bless our individual homes (D&C 85:36-38).

Paraphrased for understanding, here is what the scripture instructs:

- Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing.
- Establish a house of prayer, of fasting, of faith, of learning, of glory, of order, of God.
- Stop all wicked doings.
- Stop laughing at and talking about wicked things; stop lustful desires.
- Do not be prideful; stop being frivolous and irreverent.
- Everyone should not speak at once and make sure everyone has equal privilege.
- Love each other; do not desire other people’s possessions; communicate the things of the gospel.
- Do not be idle or unclean.
- Do not find fault with each other.
- Go to bed early and do not sleep longer than is needful, so that your bodies and your minds may be refreshed, vitalized and strengthened.

Most of all, accept the covenant of love with all its duty, obligation and promise. Simply stated, in establishing a godly home and in all things, “the greatest is love” (Moroni 7:52). †

In our families we have to walk in the Lord’s ways with all our heart, might, mind and strength. That is an “always” thing. Not just on Sunday morning.

# Jesus is Tempted by Satan

By Genie Simmons

**T**emptation is wanting to do something wrong, even for a moment. When we do something that we know is wrong, that is a sin. We are constantly reminded by the scriptures to repent of our sins. God reminds us to repent by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures and through the ordinances, like the communion service each month. Church members should regularly repent. This is a special story about temptations and Jesus.

After Jesus was baptized, and before he began his ministry, he went to the wilderness to talk with God in prayer. He spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting.

After 40 days of not eating, he was very hungry. Hoping that Jesus would be weak, Satan began to tempt Jesus.

Satan's first temptation seems like a very big one. Jesus was very hungry, so Satan said, "Prove to me that you are the son of God. Make these stones into bread."

Jesus answered with scripture, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth (comes) out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4 and Deuteronomy 8:3).

When you are hungry, your body wants food. Jesus knew that making stones into bread would feed him only for a little while, but God's spiritual food will feed a person forever.

Satan could see that his plan was not going well. So he tried something else. He met Jesus on the top of the temple in Jerusalem, the tallest part of that church. While standing on that very high place, Satan again tempted Jesus. "If you are the son of God, jump down," Satan said. "It is written that He shall give angels charge concerning you. They will protect you. You cannot even stub

your toe without the angels coming to protect you." He tried to tempt Jesus with scripture (Psalm 91:11-12). Jesus exposed Satan's misuse of scripture with his answer. Satan was trying to be very sly, but Jesus was wiser.

Again, Jesus' answer was from scripture, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7 and Deuteronomy 6:16).

Tempting God is doing something you know is foolish and against the teachings of God, but you hope he will forgive you anyway.

Satan's plan was being ruined by Jesus and the word of God. He tried a third time to tempt Jesus. He met him on a mountain-top, where God's Spirit had taken him, and showed Jesus all the kingdoms and good things of the world. "Look at all these things. I will give you all this power, and things, if you will follow me. They are mine to give."

This third time, Jesus commanded Satan to go away and again answered with a scripture, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10 and Exodus 34:14).

After this third answer Satan left Jesus alone.

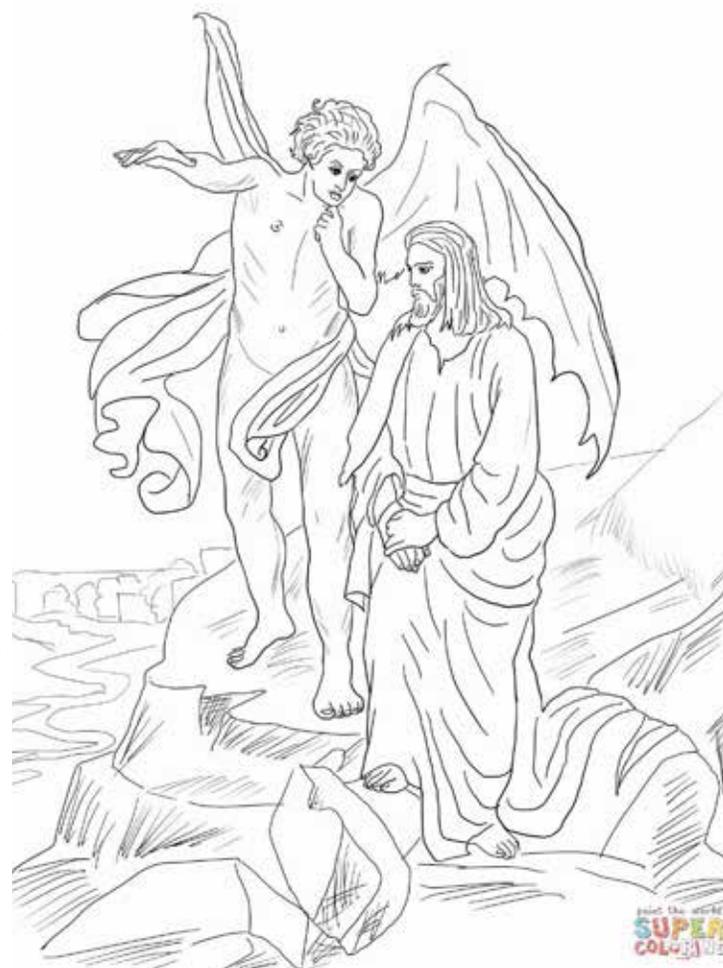
We are all

tempted by Satan, who uses the things of the world to lead us away from God. We begin to believe that we have collected these things by our own power. We often forget the teachings of our Lord.

When we let things come between God and us, we need to repent (Genesis 6:50-51). Repenting is telling God that you are sorry and you stop doing whatever you had done.

We have an everlasting covenant from God: "And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy" (Genesis 9:22). Wouldn't that be wonderful?

To read about the temptations of Jesus go to Matthew, chapter 4 and Luke, chapter 4. †



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## The Family as One Flesh

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what is the will of the Lord.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:17-33).